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# ***On Tap***

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## **CONTINUED CONSERVATION EFFORTS**

### **Reduced District Water Use**

Last year at this time, the November edition of *ON TAP* advised you of the following Metropolitan Water District decision concerning the continuing drought conditions in southern California:

*Due to the continued drought conditions in the State and water levels in State Reservoirs, Trabuco Canyon Water District (District) will soon receive official notification that its annual water allocation will be reduced by 15% for the 2009 calendar year. If the District fails to reduce water consumption by 15%, then it can be assumed very severe financial penalties will be levied against the District. The District will have no alternative other than to pass these penalties onto its customers.*

Subsequently, the Metropolitan Water District (MET) determined the 15% allocation reduction would go in to effect on July 1, 2009 and be monitored for 12 months.

So, how are we doing now that TCWD has information about the “first quarter water usage” compared to the water allocation MET has provided to TCWD? The answer is “pretty good.” It appears that water usage is down about 16% on average. This is significant because TCWD is largely a residential district. The big water users are homeowner associations with large common areas that require irrigation.

It would appear the message to “conserve water, we’re in a drought” has been taken to heart by most users in the District. Of course, there are factors that assist with this decreased use; public water awareness education, weather, and higher rates for higher users. So far, the District is on track to stay within its

water allocation, and everyone’s effort is very much appreciated by the Board of Directors and staff at TCWD.

### **Water Conservation Reminders**

Remember, TCWD does have a water conservation ordinance in place. We currently are at the Permanent Level. This ordinance can be viewed on the TCWD website under Conservation and Drought Information.

#### **Simple things to do at the Permanent Level with the District Water Conservation Ordinance.**

1. Take five minute showers. (TCWD has one complimentary digital shower timer available for every District customer – one per family, contact Customer Service.)
2. Check your sprinkler irrigation timers (no more than 10 minutes per station). During the cooler seasons we are now in, most timers should be adjusted to water less, both run times and number of days per week.
3. Outside irrigation can occur only between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m. (except repairs/maintenance or hand watering by hose).
4. Make certain there isn’t water runoff onto the curb or street when your sprinklers are on; this is an indicator that irrigation timer run time settings are too long.
5. Use a broom instead of a hose to clean hard surfaces.

### **Payments, Late Payments, and Lockoffs**

The meter reads for the District occur in two major route sequences and payments are due according

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to the following meter route reads:

1. Trabuco Highlands and Dove Canyon communities – payments are due on the 1st Monday of every month
2. All other TCWD communities - payments are due on the 3rd Monday of the month

Payments become Past Due as follows:

1. Trabuco Highlands and Dove Canyon communities – payments are past due on the 3rd Monday of every month
2. All other TCWD communities - payments are past due on the 1st Monday of the month

Late Penalties (10%) are applied the day after the past due amount is due (Tuesday).

Disconnection Notices are hung the day after the past due amount is due; typically, Lock Offs are scheduled for Thursday of that same week. If a holiday occurs between the Disconnection Notice date and the Lock Off date, a time extension is imposed.

Courtesy calls advising customers of potential Lock Offs occur on the Lock Off date on the Disconnection Notice. This happens after all payments for that afternoon have been applied and sent to the bank (Thursday).

TCWD currently is investigating software that would allow automated phone messaging regarding past due payments. This phone message would occur prior to Disconnection Notices and again prior to Lock Offs.

Lock Offs begin in the a.m. the day after the due date on the Disconnection Notice. Once a Service Order has been created for a Lock Off, a Reconnection Fee will be charged to restore water service (even if the Lock Off has not yet occurred). Sometimes if payment is made early Friday a.m., this requires Customer Service to contact Meter Department field personnel to advise of the payment and take the meter read.

- The Reconnection Fee for service between 7:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. on weekdays is \$45.00
- The Reconnection Fee for service after 3:00 p.m. and before 7:00 a.m. weekdays, or anytime on weekends is \$70.00

The Regular Board Meeting is held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the District's office located at 32003 Dove Canyon Drive, Trabuco Canyon. The public is encouraged to attend.

## Board Highlights

- October 21, 2009 – Adopted an updated Conflict of Interest Code
- Designated Board members to vote at the Independent Special Districts of Orange County special election
- Ratified the purchase of computer hardware and software
- Received status updates regarding water conservation efforts, the Baker Regional Water Treatment Plant, and the Rose Canyon and Lang Wells Upgrades to Facilities

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We welcome your comments, suggestions and questions. Please call or write Sharon E. Smith, Editor

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